



# THE CONNECTION

IOWA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL POLICY

ISSUE 2, SEPTEMBER 4, 2013 - PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



In this issue of The Connection, we focus on Prescription Drug Abuse and Misuse. Prescription

medications have become a part of everyday life for many Iowans. When used properly, they improve lives and increase productivity. When abused, they have the potential to seriously derail and even end people's lives. Parents can head off pain reliever abuse by clarifying with their children that just because something is medicine,

it doesn't mean it is safe to use for any reason. Keeping close track of medications in the home is also important. Nationally, over 71% of the youth who abused prescription drugs said they obtained them from the medicine cabinets of family and friends.

Sincerely, 

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

- \* From the Director
- \* Media Attention
- \* Iowa Medicine TLC
- \* Take Back Event
- \* Rx Abuse and Misuse
- \* Rx Drug Issues

## HELPFUL LINKS:

Iowa Substance Abuse  
Information Center  
[www.drugfreeinfo.org](http://www.drugfreeinfo.org)

Office of Drug Control Policy  
[www.iowa.gov/odcp](http://www.iowa.gov/odcp)

Partnership @ Drug Free Iowa.org  
[www.drugfreeiowa.org](http://www.drugfreeiowa.org)

Iowa Poison Control Center  
[www.iowapoinson.org](http://www.iowapoinson.org)

## MEDIA ATTENTION

Celebrity focus brings to light, very publicly, that Rx abuse is a real problem. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has classified prescription drug abuse as an epidemic. Overdose deaths have skyrocketed in the past decade. In 2012, approximately 7 million Americans reported using a prescription drug for nonmedical reasons. Here in Iowa the problem is smaller, but still a problem. Iowa's #1 Rx drug is Hydrocodone, a pain reliever. Pain reliever related overdose deaths in Iowa have steadily increased over the last decade. 52 Iowans died in 2012 from drug-related overdoses involving controlled prescription pain relievers, a 1,200% increase over 2000. In addition, there was a 608% rise in substance abuse treatment admissions for prescription pain reliever abuse from 2000 to 2012. In 2012, a near record high of 1,289 were admitted.



## IOWA MEDICINE TLC

The Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center has developed **Iowa Medicine TLC** to help Iowans prevent prescription drug abuse. By going to [www.IowaMedicineTLC.org](http://www.IowaMedicineTLC.org), Iowa parents will learn how to **Talk** with children about prescription drug abuse dangers, **Lock** or secure medicines at home, and **Connect** with the Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center 24/7 toll-free Helpline for further assistance (1-866-242-4111).

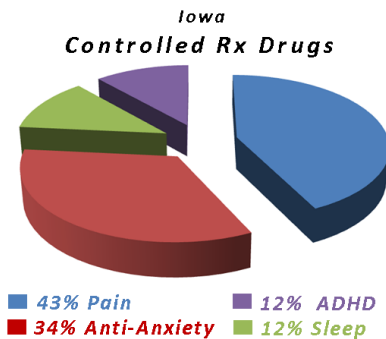
## TAKE BACK EVENTS

The next national prescription drug **Take Back** day is **Saturday, October 26**. That's when the DEA, local law enforcement agencies, community organizations and businesses will work together to collect unused medicines. To organize or find the Take Back site closest to you, go to [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback).

Additionally, Iowans may return old *non-controlled* prescription medicines to Iowa pharmacies that participate in the Iowa Pharmacy Association's **TakeAway** program. This ongoing voluntary program is separate from the Take Back days, but only accepts prescription medicines that are not subject to abuse. To find pharmacies participating in the TakeAway program, go to <http://www.iarx.org/takeaway>.



## RX DRUG ABUSE AND MISUSE



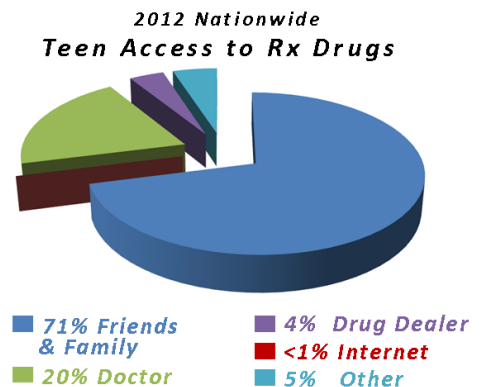
### What is Abuse and Misuse?

When a person takes prescription medication for a purpose other than the reason it was prescribed, or when that person takes a drug not prescribed for him or her, that is misuse of a drug. When a person is looking to “get high” that is drug abuse. The difference between misuse and abuse mostly has to do with the individual’s intentions or motivations. If a person offers their headache medication to a friend who is in pain, this is misuse because, they are not following medical instructions. Here in Iowa A majority of Iowa pharmacists (54.6 percent), law enforcement officials (78.6 percent) and substance abuse treatment providers (95.8 percent) surveyed by the Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy reported an increase in the prevalence of prescription drug abuse, particularly opioid pain relievers. Other data also suggests increases in the overall amount of medicines prescribed, dispensed and abused, as well as potential prescription drug poisonings in Iowa. In 2012, 52 Iowans died from Rx overdose.



### Why is Prescription Abuse Such a Problem?

Acceptability, Accessibility, Availability and Consumerism have helped fuel an increase in prescription drug use. Often, abuse may start as legitimate use and lead to abuse. Many drugs are marketed directly to the general public through TV and print ads, most often accompanied by the message “talk to your doctor”. This can result in people getting medication that they don’t need. In addition, a desire to eliminate unpleasant emotions or stresses through medication. And lastly, lax attitudes about Prescription Drugs vs. Illegal drugs. 71% of teens get access to Rx Drugs through friends and relatives.



### Warning signs of Rx Abuse

Pills in medicine cabinet disappearing, continually “losing” prescriptions, seeking prescriptions from more than one doctor, stealing, forging or selling prescriptions, excessive mood swings, taking more than the recommended dosage, or taking more frequently than recommended.

### What can you do?

17% of parents do not throw away expired medications. Proper disposal of unused Rx drugs is critical. Store your prescriptions in a safe place out of the reach of children, Talk to your family about the dangers of Rx abuse and misuse. Teens who learn about drugs from their parent are less likely to abuse. For more information got to; [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org) and [www.preventrxabuse.org](http://www.preventrxabuse.org)

## RX DRUG ISSUES

- \* Deaths by Rx drugs now exceed those caused by cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine combined, and exceed deaths by motor vehicle
- \* Despite growing concerns, many parents are not talking to their kids about prescription drug abuse
- \* 71% of Rx drug access comes from family and friends
- \* In Iowa, Hydrocodone (pain killer) is the #1 controlled Rx drug
- \* Teens who learn about drugs from their parent are less likely to abuse

## ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- [How to Secure and Dispose of Unused Medicines Medication Disposal](#)
- [Teen Misuse and Abuse of Prescription Drugs Up 33 Percent Since 2008](#)
- [Prescription drug abuse an American epidemic](#)
- [Combating Misuse and Abuse of Prescription Drugs](#)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Iowa Medicine TLC  | NIDA   |
| <a href="http://www.IowaMedicineTLC.org">www.IowaMedicineTLC.org</a> | <a href="http://www.drugabuse.gov">www.drugabuse.gov</a>               |
| PACT 360   | The Medicine Abuse Project   |
| <a href="http://www.pact360.org">www.pact360.org</a>                 | <a href="http://medicineabuseproject.org">medicineabuseproject.org</a> |
| CADCA  | Iowa Poison Control Center   |
| <a href="http://www.cadca.org">www.cadca.org</a>                     | <a href="http://www.iowapoison.org">www.iowapoison.org</a>             |



### IOWA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL POLICY

Pape State Office Building Phone: 515-725-0300  
215 East 7th, Fifth Floor Fax: 515-725-0304  
Des Moines, IA 50319 E-mail: [susie.sher@iowa.gov](mailto:susie.sher@iowa.gov)

[WWW.IOWA.GOV/ODCP](http://WWW.IOWA.GOV/ODCP)

Disclaimer: The information contained in this newsletter is for general information purposes only. The information is provided by ODCP and while we do everything possible to ensure accuracy, we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability, or availability with respect to the information contained for any purpose. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.